

Recognizing & Supporting Ministries at Beacon Hill: Summary of Our Practice

Part of our work as a spiritual community is fostering and encouraging our members' leadings. If a leading appears to be beyond the scope of a travel minute or informal support, an individual may explore whether or not the leading might be a long-term ministry.

- In keeping with Friends practice, Beacon Hill arranges for a process to 'test' a possible leading with a **clearness committee**, perhaps several clearness committees over time if a leading develops and forms. The individual sometimes forms an informal **support group** to help him or her in the early stages of following a leading.
- If a leading proves to be persistent and deep, it may become recognized by the individual and by others in the meeting as being a ministry. At this point the individual's support group might ask Ministry and Counsel to consider bringing an item to the business meeting in order to get **meeting approval for recognizing a ministry**.
- If the meeting approves of recognizing a ministry, a **Minute of Religious Service** is written for the individual, describing the ministry and the process leading to its recognition and support by the meeting.
- Ministry & Counsel is responsible for the corporate oversight of ministries in the meeting. In cooperation with the Nominating Committee, M&C creates an **Oversight Committee** of Friends who will meet regularly with the minister in order to support and challenge him or her to be faithful to the Spirit; Oversight Committees also provide accountability. One member named for these Oversight Committee has, at least so far, been from another meeting, in order to recognize that a ministry goes beyond the bounds of a particular meeting, and/or to take advantage of expertise elsewhere in the yearly meeting. If there is a fund established for the ministry, a line item is created in the meeting's budget, and the committee oversees its use.
- An Oversight Committee **reports to the business meeting** annually.
- While these committees and ministries may continue for years, at some point the minister and his or her committee may agree that it is time to **lay down the Minute** of Religious Service. At that point the clerk of the Oversight Committee prepares a report and brings that item of closure to the meeting for business.

Examples of ministries that have been given corporate meeting oversight at Beacon Hill:*

Eden Grace—ministry for ecumenical work in the World Council of Churches and elsewhere

Penny Yunuba—ministry of helping others align their finances and their values
Kenneth Sutton—workshops and speaking engagements on Quakerism
Katie Bond—healthcare ministry

*note: processes for recognizing ministries at Beacon Hill have evolved over time

Carolyn Hilles, Ministry & Counsel

(former clerk of Penny Yunuba's Oversight Committee, and former member of Kenneth Sutton and Penny Yunuba's joint Oversight Committee)